

Apocalypse 582

Chapter 582 Looking For Sparrow's Body 2

"M-Master!!!" Vulture's loud, trembling shout snapped Kisha out of her thoughts. She blinked, her gaze shifting to the fireball floating beside her.

Despite being so close, it didn't burn her or feel excessively hot.

It radiated warmth, but other than that, it seemed harmless—more of a light source than a threat.

After a moment's reflection, she walked toward Vulture, who was crouched in the far corner, mostly hidden by thick roots.

He was nearly invisible, save for the fireball hovering nearby, casting a soft glow around him.

"What's wrong?" Duke asked, his voice steady as he approached. Kisha followed closely behind him, her eyes scanning the scene.

Vulture didn't respond right away, his body still trembling as he crouched down. Kisha heard him stifle another sob, and her heart ached.

She stepped closer, her gaze drawn to a dried-up body half-buried beneath the twisted roots.

The body was eerily familiar, dressed in the same clothes Sparrow had worn the morning of their departure.

As Kisha's eyes moved lower, she saw a dog tag resting on the corpse's lap. The body, preserved like a mummified relic, was so desiccated that its features were almost unrecognizable.

The hair, tangled and matted like seaweed, clung to the skull, stained with dried blood.

The sunken eyes were hollow, and the mouth hung open in a silent scream, the expression frozen in terror, as if the person had died in agony, as if it was being drained of life and blood.

In its final moment, the dried-up body lay limply, its head tilted downward. The jaw hung loosely, the teeth visible as the lips had withered like dry tissue, shriveled and drawn tight, exposing the teeth even more.

All that remained was a thin layer of skin clinging to the bones, a grotesque reminder of the body's once-living form.

"Sparrow..." Vulture whispered, his voice breaking as he gently picked up the dog tag that had fallen into the dried-up body's lap.

His eyes scanned the inscription—Sparrow's codename and the date he had joined Duke Winters' fold.

The weight of their discovery crushed him, and his hand trembled as he gripped the dog tag, holding it tight as if afraid it might slip away.

The sobs came again, wracking his body with grief.

Duke's expression darkened, and his eyes reddened, though he remained still, standing in grim silence. His gaze was fixed on his fallen subordinate, the lifeless form of Sparrow.

It was as though he was piecing together the final moments of his subordinate's life, imagining the horror and pain he must have endured before his death.

Kisha remained silent, giving them the space they needed to mourn Sparrow's death. She couldn't bring herself to say "condolences" — those words felt hollow to her now.

In the apocalyptic world, death was a constant happening, following them like a shadow, and over time, she had become numb to its weight.

Her own well of emotion had long since dried up, reserved only for her family and Duke's.

Still, despite her detached exterior, she couldn't ignore the small pang of sorrow for Sparrow, for he had been a part of Duke's family, and in that, he had been a part of hers, too.

After what felt like an eternity, Kisha, Duke, and Vulture finally emerged from the pit. Vulture was carrying a body bag with Sparrow's remains, his solemn expression unwavering.

Kisha offered to place the body in her inventory or leave it in her territory for safekeeping, but Vulture gently refused.

He wanted to carry Sparrow's body back himself, as part of his mourning ritual, a final act of respect for his fallen brother.

Only when they returned to the base would he entrust Sparrow's body to Kisha to keep it safe in her inventory then, so they could give him a proper burial alongside the rest of their fallen comrades in City A once they came back there.

Kisha respected Vulture's wishes, understanding the weight of his mourning, and knowing that this was likely what Duke and the rest of their brothers would want as well. Sparrow had always been a loyal brother to them all.

As they emerged from the pit, the first light of dawn began to crest the horizon, but the heaviness in Vulture and Duke's faces remained shrouded in darkness.

Wordlessly, they made their way back to where they had left Zeus and Bell, their steps quiet and deliberate.

The weight of the unspoken grief hung in the air, and the silence between them spoke volumes.

Understanding the mood, even Zeus remained unusually subdued and behaved, making an effort not to disturb the solemn atmosphere.

In a rare act of sensitivity, Zeus returned to Kisha's territory space with Bell, clearing the way for Vulture to carry Sparrow's body and let it rest beside him in the car.

Kisha appreciated this gesture deeply and reached down to give Zeus a gentle pat on the head, silently thanking him for his thoughtfulness.

It wasn't until after Kisha had sent Zeus back into the territory space that she realized something wrong.

Despite her meticulous preparations to keep a portal open for Marcus and the others back in the base, allowing them to come and go freely in her territory space even in her absence, she found that the portal had unexpectedly closed once she had traveled a certain distance.

Those outside couldn't enter, and those inside were unable to leave, forcing them to wait for her to open a portal again.

She only discovered this after noticing Mike brooding inside the territory space, alone. It seemed that Marcus and the others were absent, likely having left to assist at the villa.

Mike, on the other hand, had become so engrossed in studying the mutated animals, eager to understand their nature, that he lost track of time, unaware of the others' departure.

When Mike attempted to leave, he quickly realized he couldn't. Since time flowed differently inside the territory space compared to the outside world, he had unknowingly been trapped there for hours.

It wasn't until he saw Bell, Zeus, and Kisha entering that he was finally able to communicate with anyone.

He immediately informed Kisha about the situation, explaining how he had been stuck inside the space without realizing it.

It seemed that because her territory was originally established in City A, that was the only place it could connect to.

While she could temporarily open a portal outside her territory, it would automatically close once she left the vicinity.

Kisha hadn't considered this limitation before; she had assumed that opening a portal would suffice for any situation. Now, she understood how it worked.

Fortunately, she had only been away from the base for one night, so Marcus and the others hadn't missed much, and Mike hadn't been trapped for days.

Once Kisha understood the situation, she reassured Mike that he was no longer stuck in the territory space.

To spare him from seeing Sparrow's body and the grim expressions on Vulture and Duke's faces, she sent him back inside.

Mike happily complied, eager to continue studying the mutated animals, now relieved that he could leave whenever needed.

After settling things with Mike, Kisha took the wheel of the armored car and began driving back to the base.

Duke and Vulture remained silent, lost in their grief, so she respected their space and refrained from speaking.

The journey was heavy with unspoken sorrow, punctuated only by the occasional roars of zombies they encountered along the way.

Whenever one attempted to approach the vehicle, Kisha mercilessly rammed into it without hesitation, clearing the path before driving on without a backward glance.